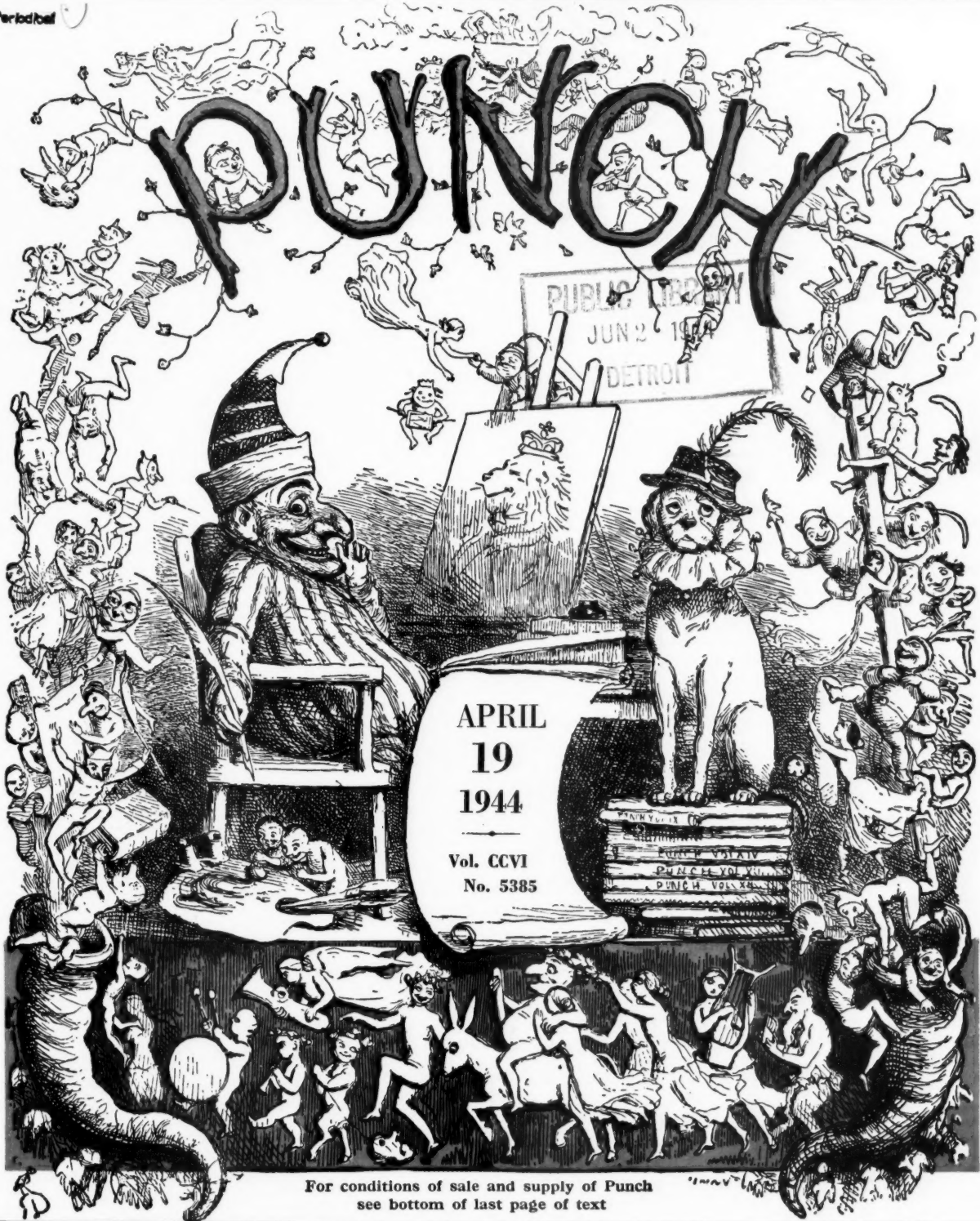


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by far

HUNTLEY & PALMERS BISCUITS

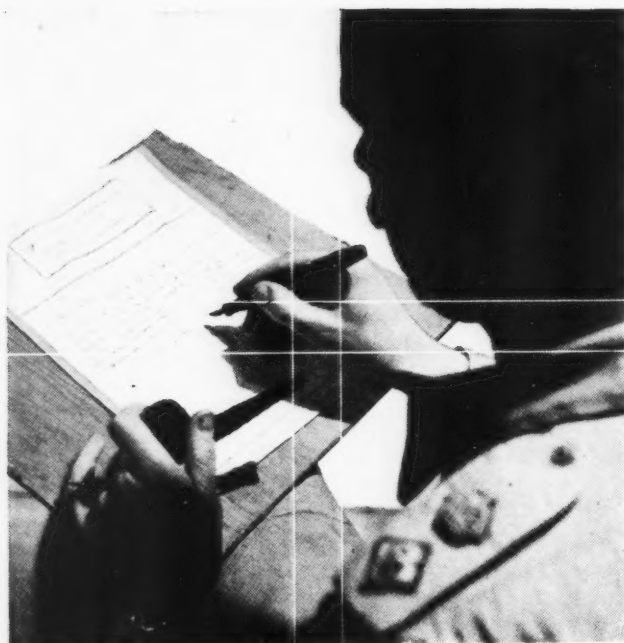
in Peace
or War

Periodical



Player's Please





The C.O. writes

"Dear Sirs,

Thanks to the care and courtesy of my modest requirements in respect of **FOUR SQUARE** have been met ever since I was called up for military duty in September, 1939.

But I am prompted to write to express my unbounded admiration for the way in which you have been able to maintain the **FOUR SQUARE** standard condition. It is still a joy to fill the old pipe and relax. When I can sit back and read your advertisements in **PUNCH** and blow a smoke ring or two, I feel that the heart of the Empire still beats with a steady throb.

Very sincerely yours"

This letter from a Lt.-Col. in the Middle East is one of many similar appreciations of **FOUR SQUARE** which may be inspected at our factory.

FOUR SQUARE TOBACCOS

In six different blends, Virginias and Mixtures, 2/7 and 2/11 per oz.

GEORGE DOBIE & SON LTD., PAISLEY, SCOTLAND



always look for the name **MORLEY**



STOCKINGS UNDIES KNITWEAR · GLOVES



CAMBRIDGE . . . wins by four lengths!

Remember 1939? Remember the Boat Race? Another win for the Light Blues. Another five months of Peace for the Nation. The shops still stacked with goodly things; with Batchelor's Fruits and Vegetables.

And then the coming of the War; the growing shortage in a Nation's larder; the requisitioning of food for fighting men. Serious days and serious still, so Batchelor's must continue to play their part in helping fighting men to keep well fed.

This means that for a little longer, Batchelor's many table delicacies will be hard to get. A simple sacrifice when you remember that those boys so worthy of the best are going to give us Victory.

Batchelor's

English Canned **FRUITS AND VEGETABLES**

SCARCE BECAUSE THE FORCES MUST COME FIRST!



Pins that stand alone..

There is no doubt about Industrial Pins made by STEAD. Small, large, simple or intricate, the perfection of finish and accuracy you demand are guaranteed by STEAD—Specialists in Pins for over 40 years. Don't take risks in buying PINS—be safe inSTEAD.

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Tele: SHEFFIELD 22283 (4 lines).

J. STEAD & CO. LTD. SHEFFIELD 2



ATKINSONS Eau de Cologne



The gay whirl of the waltz first reached England in 1812, and when the young lady of fashion first danced it, wearing her Indian muslin cut *a la grecque*, her hair turbaned Oriental fashion (and, of course, her Atkinsons Eau de Cologne), there was a great deal of eyebrow raising. To-day the eyebrows are raised again, although this time the cause is the throbbing, sub-tropical rhythm of the Conga, danced in a winding, hip-shaking crocodile. So things don't change much after all. And although the dancers now wear Utility dresses and shake a rayon ankle, they still prefer



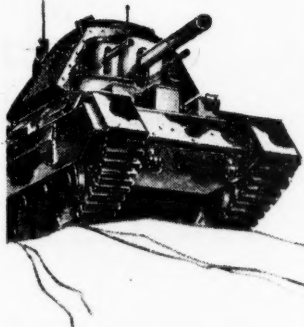
Atkinsons Eau de Cologne for adding enchantment to a war-time evening. But, unfortunately, in 1944 the last few drops of this lovely essence must be treasured carefully, for its manufacture has ceased for the duration. We're sorry!

ATKINSONS OF OLD BOND STREET

AEC 144A-96

J. & E. ATKINSON LTD.

BRITISH and proud of it



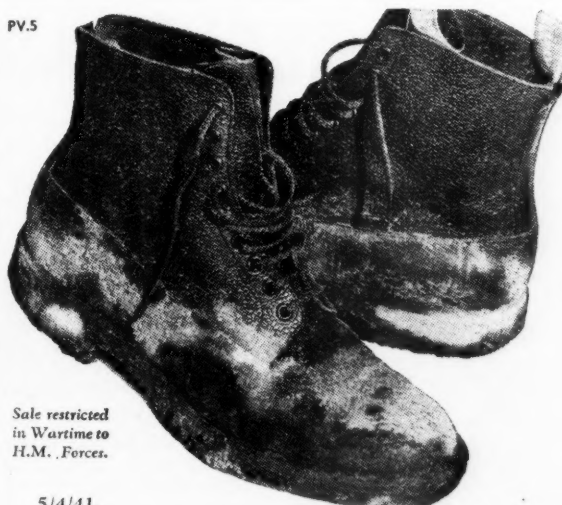
PATON'S
SHOE AND BOOT
LACES

STAND THE TEST FOR ENDURANCE

FROM YOUR RETAILER

WM. PATON LTD · JOHNSTONE · SCOTLAND

PV.5



Sale restricted
in Wartime to
H.M. Forces.

5/4/41.

I wore them throughout the retreat from the River Dyle. We marched about 200 miles and rarely had our boots off. My unit came out eventually from Dunkirk beaches. Through the salt water the boots were white—but they are still going strong.

LOTUS
Veldtschoen
GUARANTEED WATERPROOF

MADE BY LOTUS LTD. AGENTS IN ALL PRINCIPAL TOWNS

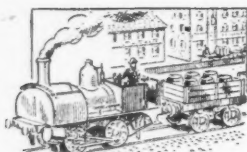


Thanksgiving Bells

Even a child can hear them. Soon the whole world will echo our Thanksgiving bells . . . Wise mothers took care to prepare for that day. They knew that COW & GATE gives perfection of health and strength for their Babies, assurance and contentment for themselves, and the knowledge that their happy children will be worthy of the happy future.

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FOOD
"Babies Love it!"



In 1868 . . .

Ruston, Proctor & Co. built their first Steam Locomotives—an order for five, weighing 36 tons each, supplied to the Great Northern Railway for shunting duties.

In 1944 . . .

Ruston Locomotives, now powered with Ruston Oil Engines, are used for a great variety of duties, including Haulage on Sidings, Public Works Contracts, in Quarries, Brickyards and Coal Mines, both on the surface and underground.



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the lavatory
clean**



It's easy to keep the lavatory clean with Harpic. Thorough and effective in its action, Harpic removes discoloration, disinfects, and deodorizes. It reaches right into the S-bend, which should be kept sanitary.

HARPIC
FOR THE LAVATORY



"BITUROS" Solution and Enamel provide the safest and most economical method of preserving the internal surfaces of drinking-water tanks and other fluid and food containers. That is why they are used on nearly all H.M. Ships of War, including the *King George V* illustrated here.

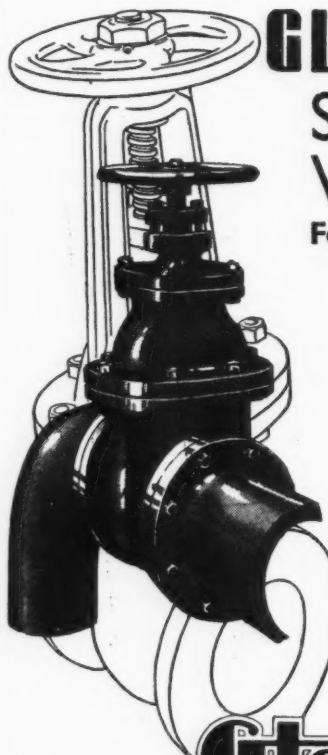
Tasteless and odourless, "Bituros" throws no sediment, cannot contaminate and can be relied upon to withstand the rigours of all climates.

"Bituros" Solution is recommended for surfaces which are easily accessible for examination and periodical recoating. In other cases, "Bituros" Enamel should be used. It provides a thick and long-lasting coating that hardens in a few hours after application, leaving a surface ready for use.

WAILLES DOVE

BITUMASTIC Ltd
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And Branches throughout
the Country and Overseas.
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SLUICE
VALVES**

For every Purpose

Although the variety of uses for Sluice Valves is almost unlimited, all but the most exceptional requirements can be met from our standard ranges.

These are all of the highest quality and include valves to withstand abnormally high pressures, drilling valves, valves for pipe lines, knife-edge valves for mass-cute and viscous liquids, also valves in bronze, steel or corrosion-resisting alloys, and we are at all times ready to quote for special valves to meet the most exacting requirements.

Glenfield

GLENFIELD AND KENNEDY LIMITED KILMARNOCK

HEAD OFFICE: KILMARNOCK, SCOTLAND

SPA TREATMENT FOR RHEUMATISM

Spa treatment for Rheumatism has been recognised for many years as one of the most satisfactory methods of combating this insidious disease. Even a mild attack means pain and reduced working capacity, and you should act *at once*, before Rheumatism gets a stranglehold on your system. To-day, a course of treatment at a Spa is out of the question for most people, as neither time nor money can be spared. 'Alkia' Saltrates, however, may be described as a Spa treatment in your own home. It has the essential medicinal properties of seven world-famous Spas and similar beneficial effects as a course of drinking the Spa waters. A teaspoonful of 'Alkia' Saltrates in warm water before breakfast each morning will soon relieve the pain, and, taken regularly, dissolves impurities in the blood stream and eliminates them from the system, thus helping to prevent regular attacks of Rheumatism. A bottle of 'Alkia' Saltrates costs 3/9d., including Purchase Tax. Get a bottle to-day from your chemist and begin your Spa treatment to-morrow morning.

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INSTANT RELIEF

from

**ASTHMA
CATARRH
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Don't wait for further attacks—get Potter's Asthma Cure from your chemist today. It will enable you to enjoy life and pursue your usual occupation. Free from opiates and does not affect the heart. Good for Hay Fever, Whooping Cough, etc.

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ASTHMA CURE**

Supplied by all Chemists, Herbalists and Stores
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**USE this
Medicinal & Toilet
Soap every day for
SKIN HEALTH & BEAUTY**

Cuticura Soap gives your skin a mild but thorough antiseptic cleansing which clears away blemishes and restores radiant youthful loveliness.

**Cuticura
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KEEP IT GOING!

"I'll be with you at 11-30!"

How the clock controls your daily round. You little thought when long ago you installed your Ferranti Clock, that its precision and reliability would prove such boon to your war effort—a prime factor, indeed in keeping it going.

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In the very unlikely event of your Ferranti Clock requiring attention send it to the Clock Servicing Department, Ferranti Ltd., Hollinwood, Lancs., where experts will quickly set it going—and keep it going.

*Workmen's Compensation
Plus X equals
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Service available to
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VIRGIN VINEGAR

*and this is the
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This good cigarette
is welcomed every-
where. Cool,
smooth and mild—
yet deeply satisfying.
It has no cork tip—
that's why it is called
Craven PLAIN.

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In GREEN packets 10 for 1/2 20 for 2/4

Carreers Ltd., 150 Years' Reputation for Quality **EP** P. 15.



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BROLAC I USED ON
THE SMITH'S HOUSE
BEFORE THE WAR
AND THE JOBS STILL
SOUND

BROLAC and MURAC, paints famous
for their lovely surface qualities and
lasting protective powers, may not be
made today. War has produced new
paint problems and special needs, with
prior claim on high-grade materials
and the skill of our chemists. But the
post-war BROLAC and MURAC will
benefit from these years of valuable
research and emerge even better
equipped to brighten British homes.

BROLAC
DOUBLE PROTECTION PAINT
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Into the thick of it! You can't get the Blue Gillette Blades for the moment. They're helping the guns abroad. But the Standard Gillette—the blade in battledress—is as tough and keen and on the job at home. Steeled for the attack, it mows down all before it—smoothing the way to that Victory smile!

Gillette in battledress

Gillette "Standard" and "Standard Thin" Blades (plain steel) 2d each, including Purchase Tax. Fit all Gillette razors, old or new.

Sometimes difficult to get—but always worth finding. Production still restricted.



Magnets

He earns no medals; his name will never make headlines; his way of life is modest and his work unexciting.

But to us he is an individual, a personality; not just a number on the time clock. He is a skilled man—and more, because for years his skill has been allied to the Philips tradition of doing things more efficiently; of making things just that much better.

He melts metals—very special metals—which are used for making "Ticonal" permanent magnets
*Registered Trade Mark

of unusual power and unique properties; an outstanding Philips' invention. He is one of the thousands of Philips work-people who gave you, before the war, the Philips products you knew and trusted so well. His skill is a vital asset to the nation today.

PHILIPS 
RADIO ★ LAMPS

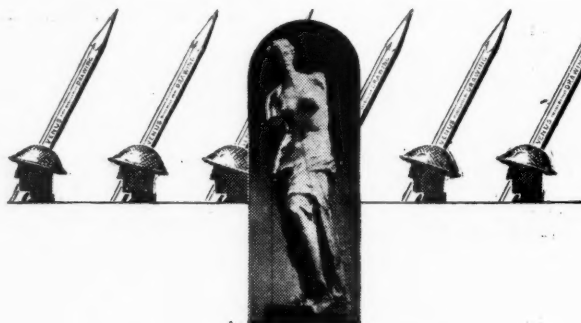
AND ALLIED ELECTRICAL PRODUCTS

PHILIPS LAMPS LTD., CENTURY HOUSE, SHAFTESBURY AVENUE, W.C.2 (24K)

An epicure dreams of post-war planning



W. SYMINGTON & CO. LTD., MARKET HARBOROUGH



Weapons of War

MORE and more pencils are needed every day to design the weapons that are still the key to victory—Tanks, ships, aeroplanes. That is why pencils made by the Venus Pencil Company are in such heavy demand for vital war industry. Branded lines, extra grades, fine finish and luxury workmanship—

these must give way temporarily to the needs of war—but the traditional standard of Venus quality still remains.

The public can still obtain and depend upon the standardised "War Drawing" (in 7 grades) and "Utility" (Blacklead, Copying and Coloured) Pencils now produced by the Venus Pencil Co.

VENUS

Still stands for Quality in Pencils

The Venus Pencil Co. Ltd., Lower Clapton Road, London, E.S.



PUNCH

OR

THE LONDON CHARIVARI



Vol. CCVI No. 5385

April 19 1944

Charivaria

MANY taxi-drivers have answered the appeal for drivers of invasion traffic. Their acceptance is in the balance, however, as preference goes to men with recent experience.

History repeats itself. Once again the German army has crossed the frontier of Czecho-Slovakia.

The Government has been assured of the full co-operation of the Straits of Dover on the holiday question. Summer will be staggered.

German anti-aircraft defences have been tuned to such a fine pitch that they have just brought down a report that was desperately trying to reach Stockholm.



Our Bulldog Breed

"NEW MAJOR-GENERAL BORN AT STOCKTON"

Heading in Newcastle paper.

A Dublin woman whose husband threw her out of a second-floor window refused to give evidence against him. Perhaps she thought he was only bluffing.

The Easter egg filled with chocolates and sweets was again non-existent this year, although some people were lucky enough to get hold of an egg filled with egg.



A famous actress declares that she would like to take up farming. But has she seen the script?

Hard on the heels of the news that the Japanese concessions at Sakhalin have been cancelled twenty-six years before their time comes a report that Hitler is seriously considering waiving the last 996 years or so of his European New Order.

Germany's wastage of man-power and material is now so pronounced that her military leaders fear it will take more than a generation of patient reconstruction before there is a possibility of the next war's being forced on them.

Courts in the United States make an annual profit of about 400,000 dollars a year in fines. Credit is due to the American public for the splendid way they misbehave themselves.

Another sign that Nazi diplomacy may be beginning to falter is the fact that on several recent occasions it hasn't managed to get round to denying certain occurrences until after they had actually happened.

Offside

"We are at war with these people," he said to the House of Lords last week. Tell the Germans that Retribution, the lady with the limp, will not quail before numbers. Tell them that every night, if they lie awake, they can hear her footfall in the darkened streets."

Egyptian paper.

One of Himmler's competitors has scored many points over him recently. When Hitler compared their scores, however, he denied ever having had as many generals as that.



The ranks of Academy entrants are seriously depleted this year. So many artists are now working for the railway companies, drawing the places people cannot travel to.

A food-taster is always at the disposal of the Fuehrer, which, if it happens, would be quickly followed by the disposal of the food-taster.

Knowledge Comes . . .

WHAT is identity? How is it that we can tickle other people but not ourselves? Do cats eat bats? Is there an after-life? Who was the greatest man in the world? What (in the opinion of the present Brains Trust) makes water wet?

I could have known no greater happiness than that of hearing my own pastors and masters squabbling with acrimony on the air, of feeling that but for the accident of a few bricks and a little space I could not only have heard but seen them squabbling, and perhaps have confuted one of them by a quoted retort—made not in cold print, but in the heat of dialogue—by another. Alas! in those days it was not possible. The isle was not full of voices then.

It is not so full of voices now as the heedless may sometimes suppose. The nightingales are kept awake on machines, and the worst shock that I ever received from the Brains Trust was the knowledge that it was not in fact "assembled in the studio here to-night." Long had I imagined that if I went out into the evening with a bunch of roses or a fowling-piece and stormed one of the multitudinous cellars of the B.B.C. I could in very truth beflower or bespatter with pellets the bodies of that little company and not merely the revolving simulacra of their vocal chords.

A little more brains of my own would have enabled me to argue that the actual symposium might need censorship, that if for instance the Lord Provost of Edinburgh or Mr. Quintin Hogg had sprung from their seats and grasped Dr. Joad by the neck the sound of gurgling would have to be deleted from the record, and that any speaker might easily stray into some of those bypaths of controversy (like religion, politics or sex) beyond the point where the Corporation has put up the notice "No Thoroughfare." These speakers are all unprepared, but it seems that they are not always unedited, and one notable occasion on which Dr. Joad was allowed to slip past the barrier is recalled by Mr. Howard Thomas in the story of his wireless Witenagemot.*

The finest testimonial that I can give to Mr. Thomas's undertaking is that to me the time of the debate seems to pass so quickly; and I could not always say that of the News. How big the undertaking was is best explained by saying that it was begun with diffidence and hesitation, was proved by trial and error, and passed from indifference to triumph until the individual wise men and women became a troupe of learned buskers, assisted by a splendid compère, wanted not merely for their wisdom but for their faces and their autographs. They were filmed, they lectured, they received offers of marriage, they had to be protected by the police lest the buttons should be torn from their mantles, their fan-mail is immense, and it was Mr. Thomas who groomed them for stardom. From a Brains Trust they have become a Hearts Trust. You may see them in this book being painted for the screen. Their faces gladden homes, and apparently they perform on the air to an audience of about thirty millions, which must mean that a lot of children are kept out of bed. There is none so high and none so low as to forbear from questioning them, and questions and answers still continue by correspondence long after the session is closed. Stars rise and wane and have to be rested. Joad is not always so high in the firmament as Huxley nor Campbell as Gould; nor are so many pieces torn off their raiment for souvenirs in one month as in the next. They out-Roscius one another. They make people think; and

they make people pink. The questions have to be assiduously jerrymandered for fear that listeners should be bored. "What is Art?" must be followed by "How do birds fly?" and "Do we eat to live, or live to eat?" by "Which way does the sun go round the earth?"

A great number of questions answered or unanswered by the Brains Trust are listed in Mr. Thomas's book, and a great many actual replies, and they shed a great light on the public's desire for knowledge and the ready speaker's powers to satisfy it, on the folly of the foolish and the wisdom of the wise.

It sometimes occurs to the very simple listener like myself that a pause of, say, three minutes (with light music) after the posing of a question might help this parliament to take a more comprehensive view of the situation. So far as memory serves me, when they were confronted with the task of saying which was the best short story in the world they forgot to notice that any short stories had been written in Italian, French or Russian; but I may be wrong. They certainly did not say that since publishers for the most part refuse to print short stories, about half the novels printed in England are short stories drearily dragged out to three hundred pages or more. But the Trustees do sometimes fail where they might be most expected to succeed. They could not say what makes the sound when a whistle is blown. They could not even name the Seven Wonders of the World. But I believe they hinted (if only in jest and with becoming modesty) that they knew.

EVOE.

And Here, to End the News . . .

(Once for All)

THE boy stood on the Burnham Scale
Beneath the Scott Report;
His eyes seemed fixed upon a trail
Of some celestial sort;
No threats could urge him down the mine.
"Until the Finns and Russians sign
I hold," said he, "the Curzon Line,
Although it's far too short."

An unofficial strike was held;
The coast resorts were banned;
War Savings must be jet-propelled,
With several Fronts in hand.
Sowing the whirlwind (stitch by stitch)
Pacific Charters had their niche,
Though some contained Aleutians which
He did not understand.

All Town and Country Planning Schemes
He took with piles of salt,
But Post-War Credits filled his dreams.
Omniscient to a fault,
As his biographer relates,
He knew, besides invasion dates,
No less about the Baltic States
Than any static Balt.

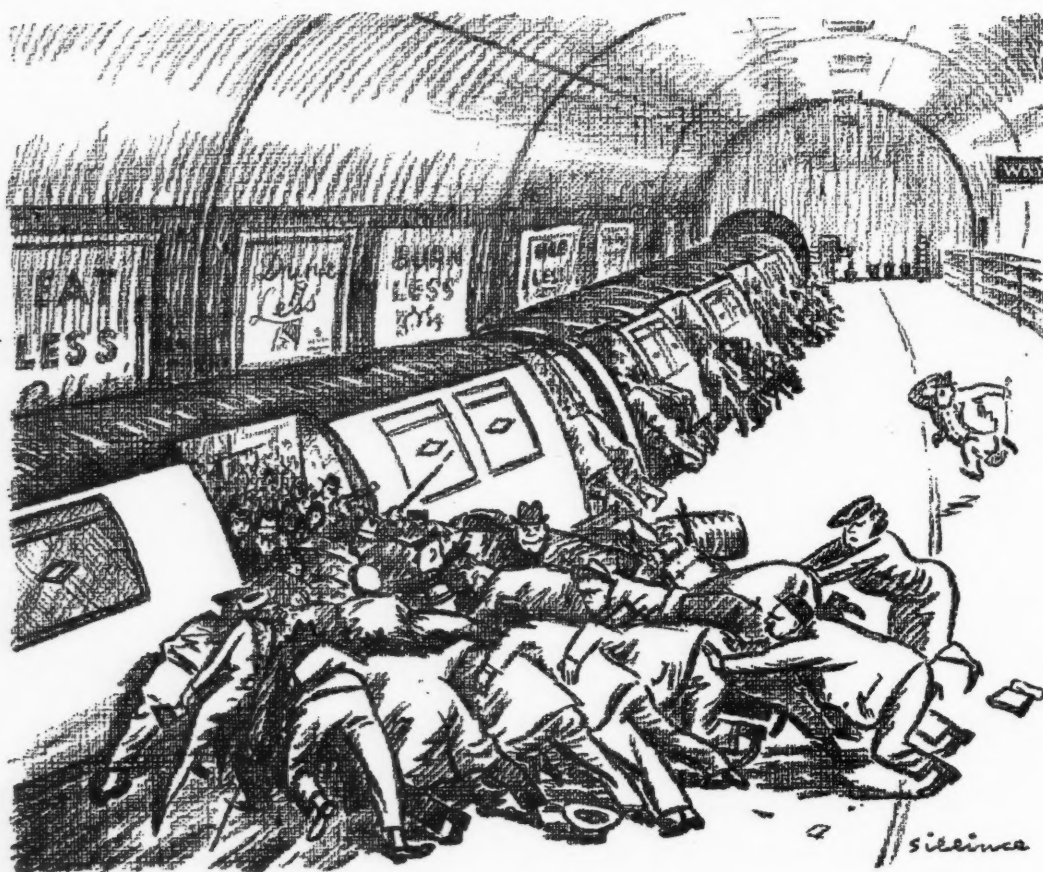
"Pay as you earn, with Common Wealth,"
The boy declaimed, "until
It strikes the Ministry of Health
That if they don't you will!"
His sharpest bite was in his bark
At someone skulking in the dark—
The man they called the AMGOT nark,
Or UNRRA-liar Bill.

R. M.

* Britain's Brains Trust (CHAPMAN AND HALL, 15/-)



THE HAUNTED WOOD



"Keep steady—we can hold 'em!"

The Small Horse

EACH time I set out for my daily walk I think of nothing except how I shall be met by the small horse. I call it the small horse, rather than the tiny one, because it is not so tall as an ordinary horse, and yet not so low as a Shetland. In point of fact I know very little about horses, my interests up to recently always having lain in other channels. For example, I am in a dilemma about applying the exact term to the small horse's colour.

So I shall describe it as a light mahogany horse, standing about five-eighths the usual size. I met it the first day I came to the cottage, whilst proceeding up a path alongside a hedge. It was poking its head over a gate. It looked at me and, being seized by a feeling of benevolence, I

decided to rub its forehead. I approached it tentatively, thinking that it might be a snapper, but it permitted me to scratch it with the utmost unconcern. The same thing happened on the second day. But on the third day the small horse was standing about five yards inside the field with its back to the gate and it completely ignored me, although I nearly injured myself making sucking noises. This was very disappointing, as I had begun to imagine that, unbeknown to myself, I was one of those people born with a way with horses.

As I stood in the path wondering what to do I observed a woman approaching in charge of two dogs on a divided leash. I immediately commenced staring into the middle

distance as though admiring the view, for I was inclined to be shy about being caught playing with horses, especially at my age. I judged the woman to be in the middle fifties. She wore thick stockings and brogues with what appeared to be a home-trapped fur coat. Evidently she was a woman of character, since the two dogs were proceeding docilely by her side, whereas, when I am leading only one dog, it insists on intertwining between my legs. The woman was not deceived by my pose, for she casually announced in passing that if I wished to attract the small horse I should offer it a handful of grass. Considering that it was contained in a field full of grass this seemed an amazing declaration. However, from the timbre of her voice

SOCKS

"DEAR MR. PUNCH,—It may comfort you to know that my favourite pair of socks bears the cheery label of your Comforts Fund.

"These socks were given to me in the beginning of the war and served through the Flanders campaign and more than twelve months of trapesing across deserts in the Middle East. The wool is matted and apparently quite hole-proof, in fact I feel that a testimonial parodying the old Pears Soap tramp advertisement is their just due—something on the lines of 'since then I have worn no other.'

"Thank you, Mr. Punch."

(Signed) G. W. A., *Capt.*

Donations will be most gratefully received and acknowledged by Mr. Punch at PUNCH COMFORTS FUND, 10 Bouverie St., London, E.C.4.

Registered under the War Charities Act, 1940

I concluded that she knew what she was talking about, so when she had gone I plucked a handful of grass from the side of the path.

Holding it at arm's length over the gate I this time experimented with castanet sounds in order to draw the small horse's attention. I should like to define these sounds better, but although I am attempting to woo clarity by making them as I write I find myself unable to offer anything more precise except to state that they are emitted from the side of the mouth. However, the small horse did turn and, standing four-square, regarded me suspiciously, possibly thinking that in the hand it could not see I held its bridle. So, still projecting the hand containing the grass, I produced the other to show that it was empty and, rather inanely, called "See—grass!" Whereupon the small horse came gently forward and accepted the tit-bit. But instead of staying to be fondled it backed a little way into the field and stood sideways to me, regarding me a little hungrily I imagined. So I plucked other handfuls of grass, and every time the same procedure ensued—the small horse ate my grass but would not allow me to pet it. I am, I hope, as determined as the next man, but as I proceeded to denude the sides of the path I began to be appalled by the amount of grass it might take to fill a horse. Finally,

I had the feeling that I was being exploited. Giving the small horse a very cold look indeed, I went home.

I resolved henceforward that I would cut the small horse dead. When all was said and done there was such a thing as the dignity of man, and it was possible to abase oneself too much. Unfortunately, on the next occasion, the small horse's head was jutting over the gate again, and it not only permitted me to fondle it, it seemed anxious to fondle me. This happened over a short sequence of visits, but, having perceived that I was now ensnared, the small horse commenced its jokes again. One afternoon it raced to the gate upon seeing me, but swerved at my approach and began to gallop round the field in circles. Each time it completed a circle it feinted to come to me, but always when I expectantly raised my hand it plunged away again. I did think of resorting once more to the handfuls of grass, but that in the near vicinity was not yet regrown and I had no wish to wander far. In the end I turned away feeling rather hurt—and it was then that the small horse came to me and looked in my eyes. And that is the difficulty. The small horse *expects* me. No matter what reception it chooses to provide, I feel that I must visit it each day or it will be disappointed. And here I am, an elderly gentleman living in the country for the first time in his life, confined to the same route day after day with dozens of other walks offering themselves. But the small horse expects me. So what can I do? Short of consulting a psychiatrist I do not know.

Notice to Firewatchers

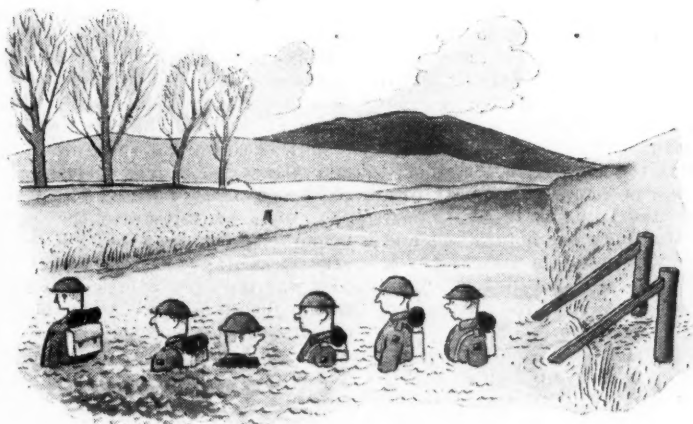
IT has been brought to Mr. Tingle's attention that fire-watchers are using the top of his swivel stool as a dart-board and have scratched a dial on it for this purpose. This is hardly fair, as everything is done for your comfort. In a small office such as this is not possible to provide everything Mr. Tingle would like, but you are asked to look after the things which are provided. The small billiards table has been greatly misused, chiefly as a saucer, and was once found next morning inside the piano, which has not played properly since.

Mr. Tingle had an electric fan put in specially to keep the air fresh, but fresh people coming every night did not know this and put the fan inside Mr. Tingle's desk and left it switched on, so that Mr. Tingle had to sort a lot of things out the following day. The basement kitchen is left very untidy owing to the dirty habits of some fire-watchers when emptying tea-leaves. These should be put in the sink and not the fireplace and not in paper balls in the pigeon-holes of Mr. Tingle's desk. The gas should be turned off when it is not on, especially when not lighted. Any further complaints of this kind will have to be brought to the ears of the proper authorities. This may not be you, but please see that it does not occur again.

A proper dart-board is now on order, so it is hoped the practice referred to will not recur, by order.

J. TINGLE
p.p. J.T.

Hollowood



"They say this bridge can't be seen at all from the air."

Lady Addle's Domestic Front

Bengers, Herts, 1944

MY DEAR, DEAR READERS, —What visions are conjured up—at any rate for me—by the very word “entrée”? It is supposed of course to be the first meat course in a repast. But I always believe that the expression arose in my own family, in the eighteenth century, with the fifth Earl Coot, who was, I believe, a man of tremendous appetite. (It was the prerogative of the nobility then to be heavy eaters. Nowadays every Tom, Dick and Harry aspires to the pleasures of the table.) Anyway, in spite of a ten-course dinner and a large supper, the Earl was, it seems, frequently unable to sleep through the night, and therefore a series of special dishes were prepared and brought to him personally by his devoted chef, who would of course knock at the bedroom door to herald his coming. Lord Coot's joyous “*Entrez!*” would apparently ring through the house, and it is easy to imagine how the word, with slightly altered spelling, became all the rage in society and subsequently passed into the English language.

To-day the entrée has more than ever come into its own by reason of its close alliance to the Salvage campaign. For with a little bit of meat here, a handful of left-over rice there, some flabby biscuits, half a beetroot, what a culinary masterpiece can be concocted by the clever cook! And one that not only pleases the artistic soul, but helps the British Empire as well.

The mention of beetroots reminds me at once of my dear Margaret, who is at present serving her King with the A.T.S. near Colchester. She has a somewhat florid complexion, and is also prone to flushing, especially over the cheeks, neck, forehead, chin and neck. Not long ago, while walking down Colchester High Street, a cheeky American private soldier called out—in a quaint mixture of English and his native patois—“*Hiya, Beetroot!*” which was of course the remark of a savage. But I am glad to say my dear girl showed both her natural wit and good-humour under the attack. Quick as a flash came her answer: “I'm not a beetroot”—and the discomfited American passed on.

Poor Margaret! It is harder, surely, for anyone brought up with an oyster in their mouth, so to speak, to be stationed in such a locality than for those whose highest ambition would have been an oyster-shell in their

rockery. But she takes it all with the pluck of a McClutch.

But to return to entrées. Half the battle, as I indicated before, is that the dish should look delightful. And in this we are particularly blessed in possessing very beautiful entrée dishes, all engraved with our initial and coronet, which gladden the eye and the heart before you lift the cover and inspect the contents. Even so, this did not prevent a little tragedy which happened not long ago to what I am convinced would have been one of my most successful dishes.

I had left over from the previous day the following ingredients: A few cooked haricots, some brawn trimmings, a fair amount of porridge and some cold scrambled egg. (This last was an experiment of two days before, when I had tried mixing dried eggs with a little Hematogon instead of powdered milk, so as to buck us all up, but it had been a thought too strong in flavour.) Well, thought I, here must be the makings of a good entrée if I can only set my wits to work. So I chopped up the brawn trimmings and worked them into the scrambled eggs—which had set rather hard by now—then arranged them on a bed of porridge with grated haricot bean scattered over the whole. Finally, I stuck in bits of left-over toast, so as to make a pretty rococo effect. The result looked, I thought, most professional, and I was delighted. But alas for my pride! I left the entrée, in one of our most handsome silver dishes, on a side table while I was called to the telephone. I returned to find that Gary Briggs, one of our little evacuees, had put the whole dish outside the back door by one of the dogs' kennels, thinking it was his dinner. When remonstrated with by his mother—for it was after all in a silver dish—he said that he thought “everyone eat off silver at Bengers,” which delightful remark of course quite won my heart, and Gary got a hug instead of a scolding from his hostess!

To make matters worse, the dog—a favourite setter of my husband's—was very sick afterwards (of course the dish was probably a little rich for a canine digestion) and Addle blamed me for the whole episode!

Curry, I find, is a very useful flavouring in entrées if one is not quite sure about the dish. Cheese also covers a multitude of sins. Sometimes, if I am very doubtful about things, I have found that to use curry

and cheese, plus a little nutmeg, makes it almost impossible to find out what is underneath the sauce.

Lastly, I must tell you about what I mentioned in my first letter: Joad-in-a-Hole. This is nothing more nor less than sausage meat (as sausages are not easy to buy nowadays), fried in batter mixture. And I call it by that name because this war-time sausage meat, with only a modicum of pork in it, and ersatz batter, without one single egg, were never heard or thought of before the war, any more than was Professor Joad. Ah, but these innovations are hard to accustom ourselves to, for those of the old school like myself. M. D.

Impermanant Ways

WHEN it's over we shall have earned a little holiday.” “Just this raid, or the war?” I asked, because it was two in the morning and we were sitting on the stairs.

“The whole shooting-match,” said James.

“I shall put in for a forty-eight immediately the blower sounds. In days, though.”

“The trouble will be where to go. There'll be no abroad for a bit.”

“There are some hotels in this country,” I said.

“No good for children. I am absolutely determined mine shan't become four-star minded. They're going to be kept simple.”

Looking at James in his woolly dressing-gown I felt that if heredity was worth a dime there should be no great difficulty about that.

“Pushing buttons for what you want is the curse of the age,” James, who really has the most extraordinary ideas, went on, “and it's going to get duller as the scientists make things more and more insipid with their wretched inventions.”

The guns in the Park, hoeing up a great strip of heaven at that moment in a highly scientific manner, made it hard for me to agree.

“What will you do, then, camp?”

“One only camps with children once,” said James feelingly. “I have. To avoid insubordination in the young a constant change of scene is vital.”

“How about a horse caravan?”

“It takes all summer to get anywhere. You can lose the horse and not notice.”

“You could have two,” I suggested.

“I don't like horses, and they

simply hate me. Two would conspire against me all the time."

Three or four express trains seemed to leave a celestial terminus rather quickly and then collide.

"Rockets?" James asked anxiously.

"Quite the opposite."

"Pity. I serve a tot of rum with them."

"I'll listen, then," I promised.

"Couldn't you go as P.G.s on a barge?"

"My wife thinks the operatives' English is on the basic side for children."

"You could stow away on a tramp."

"She gets so sea-sick."

"Is she going too, poor woman? Have you thought of begging your way across England?"

"Only too often," said James.

Someone took hold of our portion of the sky and tore it cruelly from end to end. After a brief period of levitation I came to rest again, on a lower stair.

"You can serve the rum," I said.

"That's better."

"That's much better," I said.

"With luck they'll go off again in a minute. I wonder if you remember those long hutches on wheels that the guards of goods-trains live in, with balconies at each end and nice large windows and a cheerful-looking stove-pipe? I believe that's what we want. Painted in bright colours, with bunks, and flowers outside. Some are quite big."

"Where would you plant it?"

"At the back of a goods-train, of course, where it belongs."

"Wouldn't the guard mind?"

"Why, I should be the guard. Only acting rank, naturally."

"But guards have things to do."

"Such as, on goods-trains?"

"They put on the brakes, by arrangement with the engine-driver. I've seen them winding a sort of capstan in a contemplative way. Rockets, James."

"Sorry. Well, I'd be quite prepared to do a short course at the Railway Staff College if they insisted. But setting a match to the tail-light at dusk I could take in my stride."

"You'd have to coo 'What-cheer, Arthur!' to stationmasters in a very special kind of way. I've noticed."

"That's the sort of thing I pick up very quickly. Once the Big Four realize what wonderful Public Relations we are they'll not only refuse to charge for the van but they'll beg us to come again. We shall be the ideal social lubricant, you see, between the shunters and the buffer-twirlers and the bogey-tappers and all those other rather rigid classes."



Tounge

"And what are your first impressions of our city?"

"I think our policemen are wonderful."

"Your poor wife won't be train-sick?"

"My dear chap, she sleeps with Bradshaw beside her bed. Has since she was so high. Those were rockets?"

"Not a doubt of it. Thanks. Has it occurred to you that railway companies, even if they agreed to this nonsense, are unlikely to send goods-trains where you want them to?"

"That's the whole point. I hate knowing where I'm going almost as much as I hate knowing what's for dinner. Just think of the fun of waking up in a strange siding that may be Pontypool or Spital-under-King's-Nympton or Thursday. I'll stroll up to the driver and ask where we are and he'll say 'No idea, old boy, but the

booking-clerk sounds Scots.' And just think of the panorama of British life which will be unrolled for us, sitting in our deck-chairs on our balcony, snuffing the good ozone——"

"In the wake of a train-load of fish manure being hauled by easy stages to some distant port."

"—and think of the beautiful thoughts that gentle rhythm will stir up in the breasts of my little ones!"

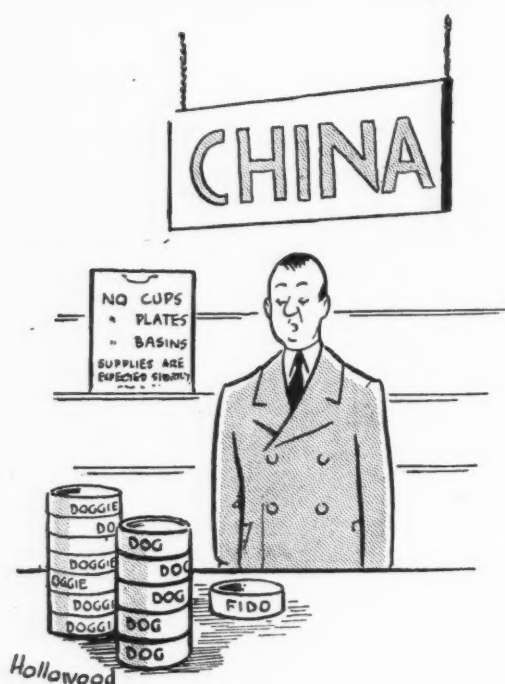
The sirens started to deliver the second part of their message.

"It all sounds quite delightful," I said, getting stiffly to my feet, "but not as nice as that."

"Have one for the stairs?"

"No, thank you, James," I said. "I am already slightly rocket-propelled."

ERIC.



"I'm sorry, Madam, but we can only sell them to people who've actually got dogs."

Typhoon

FROM spinning capstans comes a flood of spools
And milling cutters eat through dural bars,
While giant presses set with bending tools
Turn flat sheets into ribs for fighters' spars.

Here, routers whine, pneumatic hammers drop,
A foundry casts its lead in massive dies,
And in the clamour of a tinsmith's shop
Curved fairings take their shape before the eyes.

Into a paint-conveyer's gaping maw
Components in a ceaseless stream recede,
Whence dipped and dried they reach an Issue Store
Whose appetite rests on assembly's need.

On rows of jigs the spars and ribs have sprouted
And rivet-guns their noisy battle wage
Fastening dural skins—pre-drilled and routed—
That wings may leave their jigs for final stage.

Now fuselages move like some weird train
In fours abreast—each vying with its neighbour,
Swarming with fitters till, by gentle crane,
Is lowered in its heart—a Napier "Sabre."

Turning a bend she makes her final run
Complete with tailplane, rudder, fin and wings,
Her camouflage resplendent in the sun
Disdainful of that line of unborn things.

A fussy tractor now her tailwheel seizes,
A little tug upon a tarmac main
Where a refuelling tender's pipe releases
Into her thirsty tanks the high-octane.

A white-clothed figure soon is seen beside her,
A fondness in his touch, as for a wife;
Down goes the perspex hood and from inside her
Two thousand mighty horses leap to life.

At last her time has come and checks are through,
The testing pilot signals "Chocks Away,"
She taxis proudly off for her debut
In the direction that the windsocks say.

And now with gathering speed she hurtles by
A few feet up, her undercarriage folding,
Whilst we whose eyes had seen her take the sky
Release with sighs the breaths we have been holding.

See how she flings about, the echoes shaking,
Anxious to prove her worth in combat soon,
But sweat and tears and toil went to her making,
And out of travail comes a fresh Typhoon.

o o

H. J.'s Dramatic Fragments

THE next spoke in my drama cycle is a relic of the good old days when before we went for a holiday my wife sent the luggage on a trial trip to make certain that the transport people were reliable. To keep a close watch on things I usually hid inside the largest trunk, provided with a notebook and phosphorescent pencil so that I could write down any unguarded remarks made by the railway staff, though most of their comments threw little light on whether they were conscientious and well trained, being mainly concerned with the evidence of foreign travel our bags displayed, as my wife had a habit of swamping hotel labels with posters filched from the town clerk. Though not an optimum environment for composition, this kind of travel gave me the opportunity for it, and by the difficulties encountered, on my mettle is what I was definitely put.

SKULL AND CROSSBOW or WHO WILL BE SHERIFF OF NOTTINGHAM?

(The scene is a wood, all a-twinkle with daffodils, peonies and flowers generally.)

BUNNY RABBIT. Here comes that foul child to play with us.

HEDGEHOG. I wish I could think of some means of making her sit on me, but she's so revoltingly cautious.

OAK TREE. You can at least go away. She carved her initials on me, hyphen and all, and then put her arms round my trunk and kissed me.

Enter SWEET LITTLE MOPPITY, tripping along but never over

S.L.M. Oh, how are all my woodsy friends to-day? I just felt I had to come and see you, so I sneaked

The fact that goods made of raw materials in short supply owing to war conditions are advertised in this paper should not be taken as an indication that they are necessarily available for export.



"From what you say, I'm very glad you're NOT the Prime Minister."

away while the butler was helping mother with the asparagus, and now I am going to make a daisy chain for little squirrelkins.

SQUIRREL. Much obliged, I am sure.

(Through the woods echoes a crushing and a trumpeting. An elephant, MAGWITCH by name, has broken away from a local circus.)

S.L.M. Here is a new friend come to join our merry party.

MAGWITCH. Shut yer trap. Fair fed up I am. I've stood more than what you wouldn't believe. No consideration for an artist's feelings they didn't have. Gave me a corrugated iron howdah because they said it would wear longer. D'jer ever hear anything like it?

S.L.M. Oh, you funny ephalunt!

MAGWITCH. Anyone want this kid hanging around? (Pause). All right, chums, here goes. (The elephant seizes her in his powerful trunk and throws her up clear of the trees, where she is caught by a passing eagle and taken to its mountain eyrie, where they are met by its mate.)

CURIGWEN. What to goodness is it you have there, Aneurin?

ANEURIN. A small female child it is. I am thinking it might come in handy about the cairn.

CURIGWEN. Are you daft? Do you not know, man, it will very likely bring germs into the pure air of this mountain and possibly a filterable virus as well.

ANEURIN. Of course. Right it is you are, Curigwen bach. (The eagle wearily picks up SWEET LITTLE MOPPITY again and, flying out over a town, deposits her on the roof-garden of a large hotel.)

S.L.M. Will any of you kind gentlemen tell ickie me where Mummy is?

ROTARIAN BULLABY. Do you ever have toothache? If so, just you make an appointment with Rotarian Fullaby over there. That's me, always ready to do a good turn.

S.L.M. But . . .

ROTARIAN FULLABY. Has it ever occurred to you that you have an insurable interest in Mummy? Now Rotarian Bullaby over there . . .

S.L.M. But doesn't anybody love me for my pretty ways? I am used to being the centre of attraction.

ROTARIAN FIGFISH. Personally, I should describe you as the centre of repulsion.

(With an ugly look SWEET LITTLE MOPPITY leaves the roof-garden, and on her way down the stairs meets a lady in furs, all bulging and bridling.)

DOWAGER DOME. Child, go to Room 417 and tell my son that the West Wing has been ignited. That is the worst of having Red Indian billiard-markers: they make fire just anywhere, you know. You will find the fourteenth duke gambling, and unless he wishes to stake The Towers, I consider that he would be wise to notify the fire brigade, though of course it is not for a mother to interfere.

(The Rotarians begin to slide down the stairs, sweeping SWEET LITTLE MOPPITY across the entrance hall, where she is stopped by the hotel detective.)

SUB-SLEUTH SIMPSON. Now then, no leaving permitted without payment of bills prior thereunto.

S.L.M. But Mr. Man, I've only a bright new penny in the pocket of my pinny. Whatever will become of me?

SUB-SLEUTH SIMPSON. You'll go to prison for years and years. [She does.]

FINIS

o o

Spring in Hyde Park

THE oak foretells a soaking if it's later than the ash while contrariwise there's nothing worse impending than a splash, but does it mean the crocuses weren't anything to shout about if daffodils are blooming before orators are out?



"How much longer will they be repairing your mother's wretched radio set?"



"I was rather hoping we could 'a' finished Bilberry Hill before they started on the aerodrome."

An Advertiser

HE offers no seductive traits;
He recommends no pleasing list
Of airy and engaging ways;
He briefly says: Male Optimist,

And seeks, a would-be Paying Guest,
A home that should, with luck, afford
A pillow for his quiet rest,
A social atmosphere, and board.

A modest man. One can but hope
That 'neath a friendly star he'll find
A lodgment with abundant scope
For his expansive turn of mind.

Not where the sun benignly pours
A boasted maximum of light,
Where invalids sit out of doors
And things look generally bright,

But some bleak moor or cheerless vale,
A lonely homestead damp and grim
Where aspens drip and chill winds
wail,
That is the sort of spot for him.

See, where his shining morning face
Goes blandly forth, his breakfast
done,
What happy change pervades the place,
What glory shames the absent sun.

The drooping willow lifts its head;
Cabbage and onion, bean and beet,
Dawn shyly in the tardy bed
And unaccustomed birds go Tweet.

The P.G.s too, though sombre erst,
Warm to his cheer of smile and song

And feel no little bucked at first.
But pine to heave him out ere long.

For optimism is apt to pall,
Like other sweet, if overdone,
And men will murmur "Dash it all"
And darkly dodge the beamy one.

But would he smooth those beetling
brows,
Unknit th' inhospitable fist?
Then let him, if he can, espouse
A hard-shell Female Pessimist.

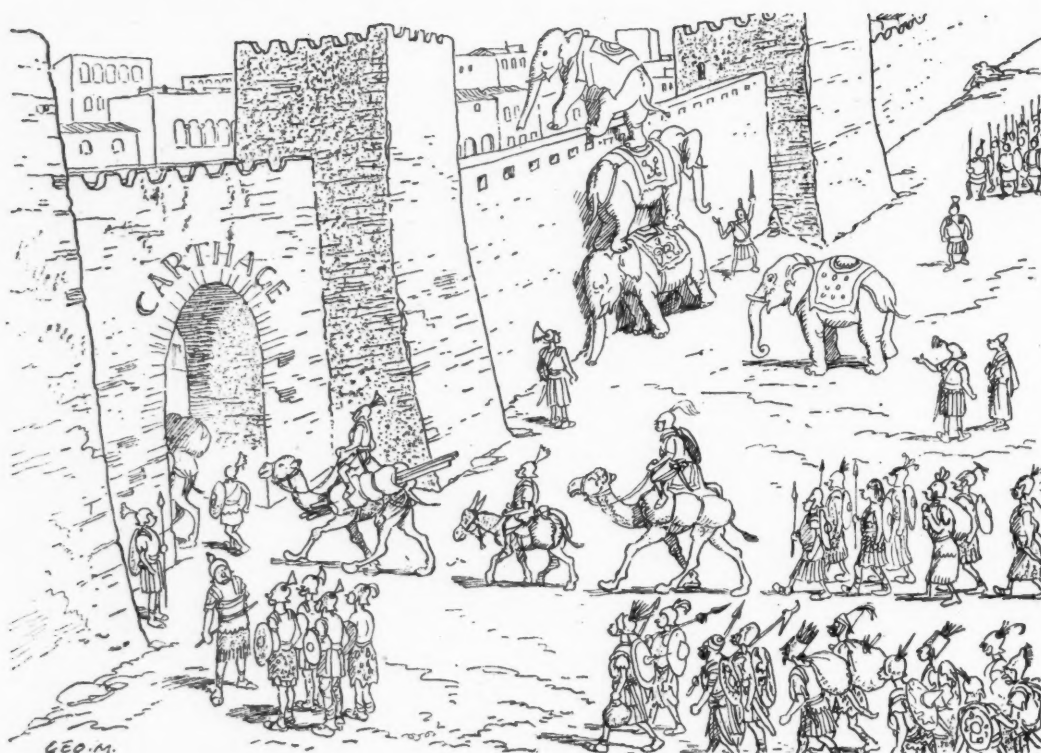
So, 'neath her boding aspect, see,
How softly glows his kindly spell,
While with enlarging radiance he
Shines through her clouds, and all
is well. DUM-DUM.



PRINCESS AND QUEEN

"There lies your heritage."

[H.R.H. Princess ELIZABETH comes of age on April 21st.]



"They've been that way ever since crossing the Alps."

Defects

WHEN first I joined the Navy I took my ideas on leave from the articles in the newspapers pointing out how superior life was in the Forces to anywhere else. These articles, which were then pretty prevalent, did not go so far as to commiserate with the fellows who did not succeed in getting called up, but they did strike a note of congratulation to those who did. They started off by citing itemized menus which seemed to be on a scale so lavish that, personally, I didn't see what time there would be left over from eating for work. But it was on the subject of leave that they really spread themselves. Leave every three months as a matter of course, whether you wanted it or not. Additional leave "as opportunity offered." Long-week-end leave with monotonous regularity. Sick-leave. Compassionate leave . . .

I know better now. I realize—we all realize in my own little bit of the Navy—that you only get leave when

your ship is in dock for repairs or refit. Which accounts for the slightly unpatriotic angle to be discerned when we ship-proud commanding officers are discussing our own small ships—or Minor War Vessels, as they are loosely but more officially styled.

"I must get into dock. Practically sinking at my moorings . . ."

"Two frames cracked, the mess-deck leaking like a watercress-bed, a capstan that won't veer . . ."

"My steering is all haywire. I've told the Flotilla Officer about it time and again. Give her twenty of port, and she goes slowly to starboard. I mean, you know, it's not safe . . ."

"My bottom is so foul I reckon it takes a clear two knots off my speed. The F.O. made me quite a rude signal last time we were out because I couldn't keep station. I flashed back that considering I was carting some three tons of assorted seaweed and shellfish about the ocean he was lucky to have me even within V/S range."

And there is a certain amount of hot rivalry concerning the unseaworthiness of our own ships. Fleet Number Five, bragging rather than complaining of a leaking forepeak, has no hesitation in declaring that the bent guard-rail-stanchions of Fleet Number Three are (a) imaginary, (b) nothing to render the ship unseaworthy, and (c) nothing more than unflattering evidence of Fleet Number Three's peculiar ideas on the technique of coming alongside the quay. Fleet Number Eight, claiming a tress of seaweed two feet and nine inches long growing from the stern (the skipper went over the side in a bathing-dress to measure it), maintains that this represents a bar to progress that cannot be equalled by the chipped propeller-blades that Fleet Number Ten sustained when coming astern just that fatal two seconds too long.

I don't suppose one of us keeps the Ship's Log with one-half of the punctual zeal with which we keep the

Defects Book. Every now and then we make an abstract of the entries for the Defects List that each of us has on hand ready to whip out and confront the Authorities with when the Authorities are so unwary as to walk on board. I have no doubt that, except in my own case, these Defects Lists are little more than discreditable works of fiction. When we meet ashore in the evenings, we boast about these Defects Lists.

"Found two more defects to-day. That makes forty-three on my list."

"Pooh! I've got fifty-four on my list—and all of 'em legitimate."

Periodically, in a spirit of hopefulness that is not often justified, we take our Defects Lists along to the Flotilla Engineer Officer. And Jock brings out his pencil and bleakly crosses out item after item.

"Mast-head lamp-glass cracked. That's no' a defect."

"What is it, then—a ruddy advantage?"

"H'm, 'Broken gun-sight on port Oerlikon.' Well, well, now—and does that make ye unseaworthy?"

We respectfully point out that the terms of our Sailing Orders inevitably stipulate our being "in all respects ready for war," and we should hesitate to enter the theatre of war with an unreliable gun-sight.

"There's something in that," Jock grudgingly concedes. "But it's no' a docking job, and well ye know it. (Have ye got your new supply o' duty-free gin on board yet?) It's a job for the Ordnance tiffy. I'll send him on board the morn."

In the compiling of my Defects List I have plenty of willing co-operation from the ship's company. The Motor Mechanic comes into the cabin with a happy smiling face to report strange clattering noises from the starboard main-engine, together with traces of white metal in the sump. The Cox'n talks of a rasping sound when the wheel is put over to anything above port-thirty. The First Lieutenant prowls hungrily about the ship with a pencil and his "Navigating Officer's Notebook" at the ready. The Leading Stoker signifies his willingness to get busy with a hammer and a marline-spike on the hull after dark any time I like to tip him the wink. Even the Signaller, appealed to for collaboration, discloses a sinister fraying of one of the halyards.

"It's going to give one of these days, that halyard is, sir. And then we shall get a bottle for not repeating a hoist."

In common honesty I have to direct him to rig a new halyard.

"No more signal-halyard on board," states the First Lieutenant, with much satisfaction. "And we couldn't get any from Stores either."

"Did you try?"

"Not very hard," he confesses.

But I know perfectly well that Jock's inexorable pencil won't leave that frayed halyard on the list, even though I should of course enter it as "All rigging in need of renewal." The last time I presented Jock with a list—a magnificent list, giving sixty-three defects, most of which I believed in myself—he gave a tolerant smile and reduced it to fourteen items, all of them superficial.

"There ye are!" he observed. "Only fourteen minor defects! And how long is it since ye were in dock? Ye keep yer ship in verra good shape, my boy. Ye're a good lad—I'm verra pleased with ye!"

However, at the moment I am hopeful. Fleet Number Twelve, who is very new to the job, came alongside me this morning at half-ahead both, and was too overcome with excitement to think of stopping and going astern.

The First Lieutenant was absent-mindedly going to put out a fender, but he recollected himself in time and withdrew it. She hit us a beauty, right in the quarter, and I am convinced, whatever Jock may say, that at least three frames are gone. Number Twelve is obviously going to be an asset to the Flotilla. Number Two has earnestly requested to be the next one he comes alongside.

Or could there have been four frames to suffer? Maybe I'd better go and have another look. After all, you can't be too careful when you've got a ship of your own to look after.

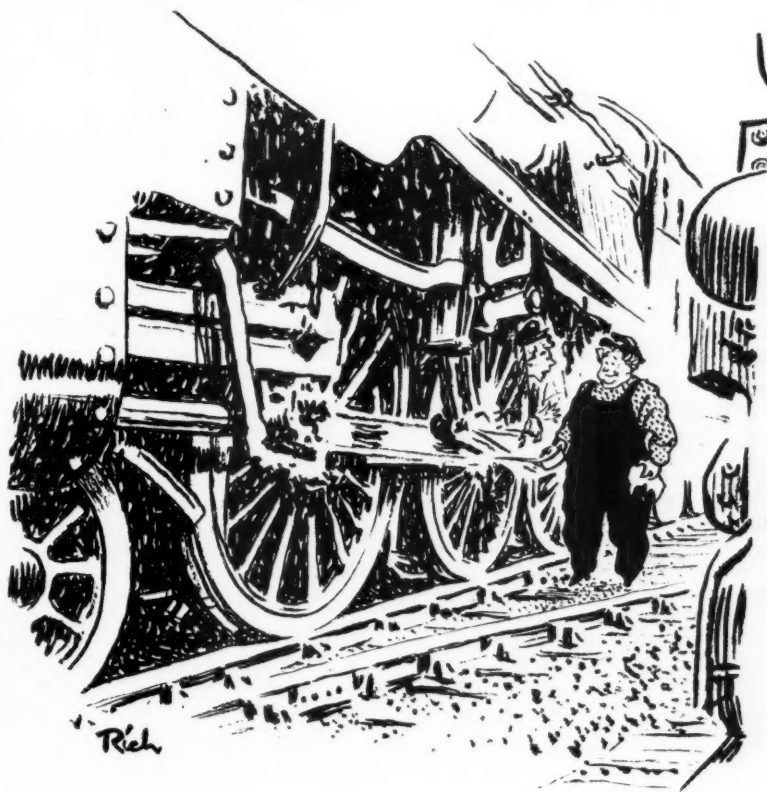
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"Maid's uniform required; also grey frock for nannie; baby's potty."—Advertisement. Thanks for the tip.

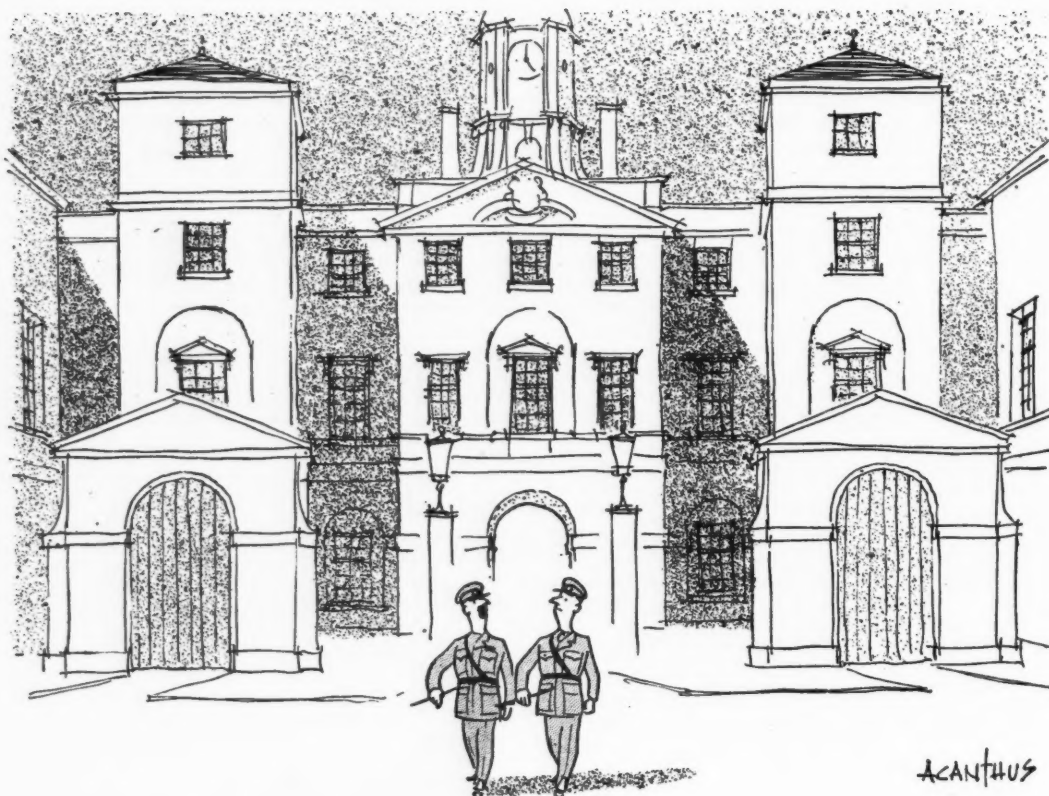
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Now you See It, Now You Don't.

"Behind every social problem stands revealed the hidden hand of alcohol!" Notice displayed on a Liverpool Y.M.C.A.



"... in ruched pink chiffon with an organdie bow, and only three coupons."



"Their small-arms drill isn't bad, but their spring onions can't touch ours."

The Cosmic Mess

By Albert Haddock ("Stertorius")

THIS column will be completely fearless. It will not care a hoot what it says or anybody says, except the Editor and the Proprietor, and the Ministry of Information, and the Foreign Office, and the Service Departments, and the House of Commons, and the advertisers, bless them! Apart from anything that these have to say, we shall say what we think—if we have time. We shall write in Haddock English. Haddock, by the way, does not refer to the fish; it means Handsome Amiable Daring Debonair. Original Correct Kind.

* * * * *

Nobody ever mentions U.N.R.R.A. without apologizing for the use of a name so shocking for a conception so noble. But nobody suggests a better. The Russians—pardon, the Soviet—

have a method in this affair, somebody told us. When they have to find an abbreviated title for some new body or institution, they do not, as we do, slavishly follow the initial letters of the words; they take a letter or two from a word here and there and make a decent name out of them. "Ogpu", we were told, is an example. Not that "Ogpu" strikes us as beautiful, but it may be beautiful in Russian. Anyhow, it is better than "Unrra". Well, now, then—what can we do about "Unrra"? This horrid symbol stands for United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Association. Well, for example, "Una" would be better—or, if you like, "Unar" (United Nations Association for Relief). But, can we not get away from the actual words, look into the heart of the business and make a name accordingly? Something like

"Upsidaisy" is really what we want. Perhaps that would not do, but, blow us if it's not better than "Unrra"! Well, boys, here is a chance for you to use your brains, and get away from those cross-word puzzles.

* * * * *

We have been quietly working at the "rocket-gun", we see, for seven years. "Jet-propulsion" was started even earlier. For all we know there are other surprises not yet due for revelation. One day there may be a slight diminution in the number of Britons who complain that we did nothing at all in the years before the war. The Spitfires and the Hurricanes, after all, were ready in 1940: and they were not produced in ten minutes by a good fairy. This paragraph is *not* written in Basic English.

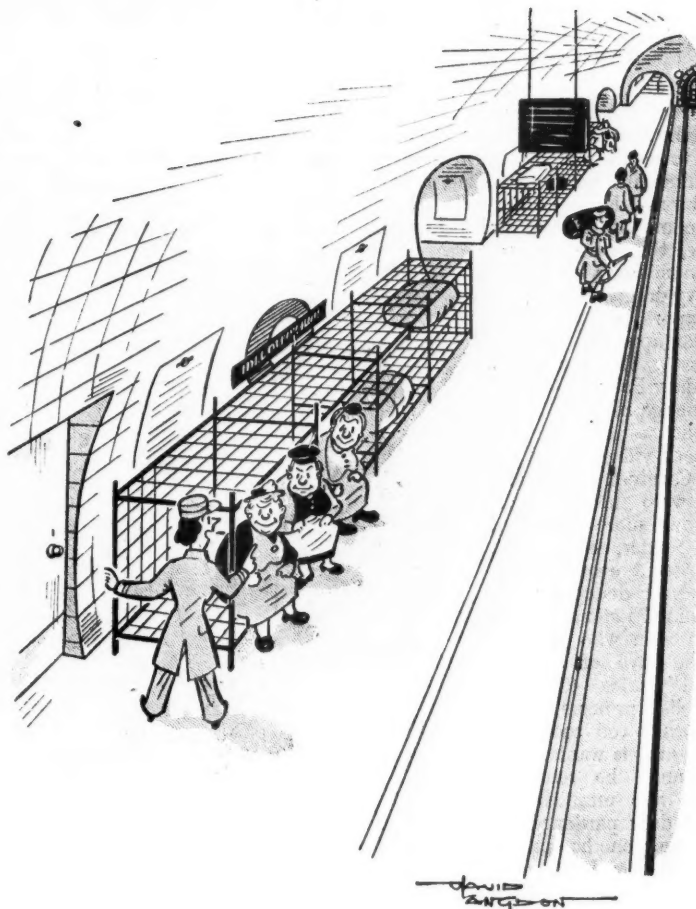
The Four Equalities (Opportunity, Intellect, Character and Beauty) Movement gathers strength and has an imposing list of Parliamentary candidates, but not much money. Miss Pansy Ditch will stand at the Mugling by-election. Subscriptions should be sent to the Haddock Fund, London. The dissident group, who desire to add a fifth Equality (Income) have retired to Manchester. On no account send them anything, the dirty Kameneffites.

* * * * *

The Bridgehead for Britain Group also reports satisfactory progress, though the recent Unity Meeting at a railway hotel ended in a free fight, it has to be confessed. This, it is said, arose from the noisy claims of the extremist (Parasite) sub-group, who wish to see Britain's defensive frontier run through Paris, Brussels and Amsterdam. The more moderate opinion prevails among the majority that Great Britain should be content with reasonable defensive slices of France, Holland and Belgium (with, of course, the whole of Hanover). Whatever the internal differences on points of detail, the Group is united, we hear, in condemning the childish attitude of the various Free Governments concerned, who have raised all kinds of petty objections to the transfer of their territory in the interests of peace, and are believed, in many cases, to be in the pay of the Banks.

* * * * *

A scheme to relieve Mr. George Bernard Shaw and other distinguished but highly-taxed authors is receiving a good deal of attention among Government personnel. Many authors have been attracted by recent revelations concerning the proceedings of the National Trust, where, in some cases, it appears, citizens nobly present their estates or mansions to the nation, but are permitted to make use of them during their lives, free of tax! The parallel between a baronial park or mountain and the works of Mr. Shaw is not exact, but it is close enough. Mr. Shaw's plays, though they are, unlike the park and mountain, the owner's own work, will be taken away from his heirs fifty years after his death; and even twenty-five years after his death, by the queer provisions of the Copyright Act, anyone may make use of them without leave, on making a prescribed payment. Nevertheless, for fifty years they will own the copyright and make, no doubt, a considerable income. The new proposal is that there should be a National



"Would you people mind shouting 'Mind the doors!' rather raucously while I nip in for a quick cup of tea?"

Trust for Literary and Musical Works of Merit. To this Trust, Mr. Shaw and other Approved Authors should be able, if they so desired, to hand over their property—that is, their residuary or posthumous copyright of fifty years. That is to say, immediately after the author's death his works would come into "public domain" and could be performed or published without payment of royalty. His heirs, if any, would suffer loss, but those authors with heirs would probably keep out of the scheme. During the author's lifetime, of course, he would receive his royalties as usual, but free of income-tax.

* * * * *

One or two new and hideous words

have recently come our way. A military staff officer told me about "desecretize". "Is it not about time," you see on a Minute, we gather, "that the SECRET Report on So-and-so was desecretized?"

We passed this on to a Civil Servant in another office. "That's nothing," he said, "I am constantly using the word 'de-enemized'." "What in the world is that?" we faltered. "Why," he said, "when a place like Sicily has been sufficiently cleared of the enemy to permit of the resumption of trade, we say (I am sorry to say) that the territory is 'de-enemized'." "You mean that it is freed for trade?" we said. "I suppose I do," he said. "We never thought of that." A. P. H.

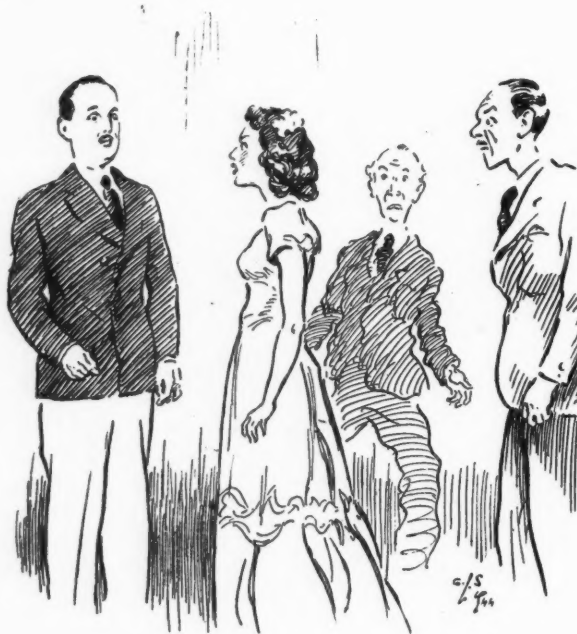
At the Play

"THE LILAC DOMINO" (HIS MAJESTY'S)

THE Colonel's daughter *Georgine*, wearer of the lilac domino, and her lover the *Hon. André D'Aubigny*, come back to us from a lost world of blue mazurkas and white camellias, merry widows and ladies of the rose, maids of the mountains and waltz dreams. Oddly, there are no uniforms: neither a hussar nor a heavy dragoon is in sight. This apart, the swarthy has all the appropriate trimmings. We are at a legendary Palm Beach—in the lounge of the Casino, on the terrace of the Colonel's villa, and at the local Carnival. Skies and seas were never bluer, sunshine more dazzling, roses redder, champagne more potent, evening-dress glossier, or dialogue more firmly in the idiom. "Forgive a man who gambles for the love of a girl? Never!" cries *Georgine*, the dollar princess. But she speaks too soon, for the evening is waning and plots must be resolved. Within five minutes the man is duly pardoned (in song), everyone has paired off with everybody else, and we leave the cast impressively grouped for the finale.

It is now twenty-six years since this operetta began its long London run at the Empire. The latest edition, in spite of interpolated numbers and topical quips (spam is on every comedian's menu nowadays), is inescapably a period piece. At times, as it rustles towards us from a vanished world, there is something curiously affecting about its conscious mannerisms and its carefully-ordered progress. Still, it is good to meet it again, especially after the stridency and glitter of such an up-to-the-second Broadway "musical" as *Something for the Boys*. That newcomer has no room for sentiment; its sole object is to get cracking. In *The Lilac Domino*, on the other hand, romance reigns; the heroine's task is to sing, and much of the humour is left to a chartered funny man. (Here Mr. LEO FRANKLYN is professional and discreet.)

CHARLES CUVILLIER's score remains agreeable. Its celebrated title-number is sung unaffectedly by Miss PAT TAYLOR, a good choice for Clara Butterworth's part of *Georgine*. Others in the formally-patterned picture are Mr. BERNARD CLIFTON as *André*, Miss ELIZABETH FRENCH, and particularly Mr. RICHARD DOLMAN as the dancing member of those Palm Beachcombers who wander inconsequently from casino to garden-party, party to Carnival. The third act consists



THE LILAC TURNS SCARLET.

<i>The Hon. André D'Aubigny</i>	MR. BERNARD CLIFTON
<i>Georgine</i>	MISS PAT TAYLOR
<i>Prosper</i>	MR. LEO FRANKLYN
<i>Colonel Clevedon</i>	MR. BILLY HOLLAND

almost entirely of Carnival fireworks, principally exhibition dancing. Although by then the plot has become an insubstantial pageant faded, it is ungracious to complain. The revival has been a pleasant look backwards, and the scent of its lavender and lilac should drift for months about the stage of His Majesty's. J. C. T.

"THE PHILANDERER" (ARTS)

MR. BERNARD SHAW's topical comedy of 1893 is a very different type of revival. This production should be a collectors' piece: one is not often permitted nowadays to see the philanderer at work, to hear those early Shavian views on Ibsenism and the

"New Woman," or to watch *Dr. Percy Paramore* brooding in the enlightened gloom of the Ibsen Club over the loss of his cherished disease. Mr. SHAW has made it amply clear in his preface to *Plays Unpleasant*—hardly a just adjective for *The Philanderer*—that the play needs "the most expert and delicate sort of acting—high comedy acting." Although the present company cannot answer this demand, one performance at least is richly satisfying and the sets fulfil the stage directions

to the very pictures on the walls, even to the "School of Anatomy" which overlooks *Paramore's* proposal to *Julia* in his apartments in Savile Row.

This was Mr. SHAW's second play. Dated though it is, it still comes off the shelf as a lively loquacious comedy of a New Order, shot with such Shavian flashes as *Charteris's* pair—"That boy will make his way in this country: he has no sense of humour," and "Craven's a devout believer in the department of witchcraft called medical science." In the Arts production, directed by Mr. HENRY CASS, one is less interested in *Charteris* and his affairs (Mr. RICHARD WORDSWORTH, tawny-bearded and knickerbockered, looks like the young G.B.S.) than in the doctor's dilemma of *Paramore* who discovered an extremely fine disease of the liver, only to have it discredited by a pampered Italian vivisectionist. *Paramore* is a pompous and thoroughly conscientious ass: Mr. DAVID BIRD plays him to perfection, especially in the wooing of *Julia Craven*, whom the doctor takes off *Charteris's* hands.

Mr. WORDSWORTH sails through his long part with a good-tempered ease, but the performance could be more varied in tone. Similarly, Miss JOAN HAYTHORNE and Miss BARBARA WARING do not strike all possible sparks from *Charteris's* discarded yet pursuing *Julia*—fated to become Mrs. *Percy Paramore*—and the widow *Grace Tranfield*, whom the philanderer is clasping when the curtain rises on that night-piece under the gas-globes and in front of the honourable load of theatrical photographs symbolizing a dramatic critic's home. J. C. T.

Complimentary

IT was an American true-life story that gave me the idea. It told how a poor, plain, gap-toothed girl of seventeen years was transformed by a compliment. When Bill O'Malley the drug-store attendant greeted her with "My, but you're prirry!" he started something. Lilian bought herself a mirror and studied the reflection of her angular features very carefully. She decided that O'Malley was right. The rest of the tale is unimportant. How Lilian began to wash regularly; how she passed her screen tests with flying technicolors; how she won her "Oscar" for a superb performance in the screen adaptation of *The Sky is Overcast* by the brilliant new novelist William O'Malley—all this and more may be surmised. It was the compliment that impressed me. For a long time I had been looking for some new way of helping the war effort. The inadequacy of my "Salute the Soldier" contributions troubled me sorely. I am not a rich man.

But compliments are cheap enough.

"Good morning," I said to the girl in the tobacco kiosk. "Do you mind if I tell you that you look remarkably pretty this morning?"

She looked up showing a lot of white in her eyes.

"Really?" she said. "How interesting! Well, we still haven't got any matches, see!"

"I assure you . . ." I began.

"Oh, stow it!" she said.

The conductress was handing me my change. I looked at her and smiled.

"What the 'ell you grinnin' about?" she said. "An' if you can *read*, mister, it says kindly 'ave exact fares ready—if you *can* read."

"I'm so sorry," I said. "I was merely thinking how very pretty you look this morning."

She straightened her back and raised her battery of bus-tickets menacingly.

"Listen," she said, "you're the fourth to-day who's made a crack about my 'ay-fever. Come to look at it, your map don't look too sparklin' neither."

At Oggolindo's in the Strand I tried again. The lift-girl really did look most attractive in her bright uniform. Her hair was close-cropped and jet black. Her tunic was olive green with gold buttons and epaulettes. The red girdle matched the stripes down the sides of her trousers.



"'E's got to come 'ome and you'll just 'ave to do without a rear gunner."

"Fourth floor, please," I said; "and if you don't mind my saying so you look very, *very* pretty this morning."

The look that greeted this innocent remark was rather terrifying. Only a cavalry officer—a South American cavalry officer, that is—could have looked so many daggers.

By this time I was bitterly disappointed. My shorthand-typist wept a little when I told her how well I thought her spectacles suited her. The waitress at Moot's complained to the manager.

I felt very miserable when I reached home. After supper I tried to read, but

concentration was difficult. At two minutes to nine I asked my wife to switch on the wireless. She did not move. She was lying huddled up on the settee. She was crying softly.

"Oh, Bertrand," she said, "you're so different these days. I'm sure you've stopped loving me. You used to tell me . . ."

o o

Apologies to the Present Vicar

"When I was vicar of St. John's, —, people left their door-keys outside their doors. Who would feel safe in doing that now?"—*Church newspaper.*



"Those are for salvage; these are for the Forces;
but these we'd better keep—they're not ours."

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Lloyd George

IN *The Man David* (HAMISH HAMILTON, 10/6), MR. JACK JONES follows the prevalent fashion of writing biography as though it were fiction. So we are admitted to the private reflections of Lloyd George and many other politicians in hours of triumph, moods of doubt and disillusion, and so on. It is a method which presumably kindles sluggish readers, or it would not be so popular, but readers of average sensibility find that it blurs rather than stimulates their imaginative sympathy. This flaw apart, Mr. JONES has written a lively and reasonably sincere narrative of Lloyd George's career up to the outbreak of the last war. He opens with David at seventeen, posting an article to the *North Wales Express*. It is signed "Brutus" and deals drastically with the Marquis of Salisbury in particular and the Tory party in general. Articled to a lawyer, David was equally attracted by politics and the pulpit, but having been brought up as a Peculiar Baptist, a church whose preachers are unpaid, he decided for politics. His first ambition was to be the Parnell of Wales, and it was as the champion of Home Rule for Wales that he stood against the squire of his village and was elected to Parliament in 1890. For some years he regarded the English as foreigners and London with a certain contempt, but the fame which he acquired through his championship of the Boers, whom he looked upon as the

Welsh of South Africa, widened the scope of his ambition, and the Welsh liberator melted into the English politician. Under Campbell-Bannerman he became President of the Board of Trade, and a few years later Asquith made him Chancellor of the Exchequer. But he did not fit in easily with his Liberal colleagues. Politically, and also personally, he remained a solitary figure, engrossed in his own struggle. Speaking of Asquith to Lord Riddell, he said that it was unwise of the Prime Minister to have private friends in his Cabinet; close friendships were a mistake in political life. Even his wife had little influence on him, and after the death of their eldest daughter withdrew into herself, her face "setting into the sorrowful mould which was to be such a handicap to her as a political hostess." In 1911, when he issued his famous warning to Germany, he became for the first time an international figure, and when the war broke out he saw, after a few days of uncertainty, where his path lay, and lifted the eyes of the nation upwards "to the great peaks we had forgotten, of Honour, Duty, Patriotism, and, clad in glittering white, the great pinnacle of Sacrifice, pointing like a rugged finger to heaven."

H. K.

English Food for English People

The days when we could plume ourselves on being "the greatest aggregate of consumers the world has ever known" are past. Even a sea-anemone would get tired of sitting open-mouthed upon a rock from which the food-bearing tides had receded. It is all the more intolerable that so excellent a text-book as *Good Farming* (HODDER AND STOUGHTON, 3/-) should need to warn intending farmers that they will find ranged against them not only weather and pests but price levels "governed by world markets and/or political considerations." English food must have precedence in English markets—and the more markets the merrier, or farmers will have to confine themselves to what are quaintly termed "protective" foods—the foods that protect you from the effects of the processed ones. MR. V. C. FISHWICK's insistence on the importance of mixed farming and the dangers of monoculture is the sound bias of a primer which is before all things practical. It is, in fact, the key volume of an expert series on farming. As such one regrets its stress on the chemist rather than the biologist. But it is unflaggingly interesting, knowledgeable and enthusiastic; and its author's own chapters on crops, stocks and systems of management are followed by detailed descriptions of thirteen other men's farms.

H. P. E.

One and All

MR. A. L. ROWSE, in his *Poems Chiefly Cornish* (FABER, 6/-), adopts modern forms, but his work should appeal even to those old-fashioned people who as a rule jib at poetic innovations. This is of course partly due to something in himself, partly too to an excellent lucidity which lets one know what he is driving at, but mainly to its being "chiefly Cornish." The Duchy is popular, but is nowadays a distant land to many whose journey is not really necessary, and his poems will impart a not unpleasant nostalgia even to readers who are not of Cornish origin. His neighbourhood is round about St. Austell. The jolly names crop up. Trennythron among its trees (he is not old enough to remember it in its pre-bishop days), Menabilly (he speaks of that "stern patriarch, old Jonathan Rashleigh," who was pleasant to the young), Penrice, the Gribbin, Polkerris, St. Blazey, sweetly they fall upon the ear. One thinks of "Q" down in his haven. On one occasion, instead of entering Cornwall by what he evidently thinks is the right and proper way along the south (as it is), he found himself

doing so "strangely" by Launceston, and, whether as a result or not, he suddenly lets himself go, "remembers to hate," and flies into a really bad temper. And this leads to a just complaint. It is a trick of Cornish people to talk about the past. He does so often. But his book leaves the impression that he needn't have been so melancholy over it. Without bursting forth with "words of magnificent foolery that will shake the roof-trees" he might be a bit more cheerful. And ought he to call furze "gorse"?

J. K.

Rural Meditations

These times are not propitious to a peaceful absorption of the passing scene, and one must at least admire, even if one cannot wholeheartedly applaud, Mr. HERBERT FURST's attempt in *Essays in Russet* (FREDERICK MULLER, 10/6) to supply the world of 1944 with some sort of an equivalent to the *Essays of Elia* or *The Roundabout Papers*. Some years ago he bought a cottage in Sussex, for the sake of the view, which he used to enjoy from a home-made seat built of stout planks with legs sunk nearly three feet into the ground. On this "monumentum aere perennius," as he considered it, he carved the word PAX. Returning to the cottage after Dunkirk, he hastened to where the seat had been, but there was no trace of it. Troops had swept it away in the course of their manoeuvres, German bombers followed the troops, and Mr. FURST, having narrowly escaped destruction, moved inland to a village in Oxfordshire. On the whole he does not succeed in retrieving his vanished PAX in the ruminative meditations, interspersed with rural sketches, of which the rest of the book consists. Miss AGNES MILLER PARKER's imaginative woodcuts evoke a small and distant world, more serene than ours even when the subject is searchlights illumining a bomb-shattered town, but Mr. FURST's pen does not often achieve the same composing effect. Only once perhaps are artist and author evenly matched, when Mr. FURST describes the old horse who used to stand for a long time each day gazing at his own image in the author's garage window. More congenial to him as a rule, in spite of many efforts to convey the happiness belonging to more normal scenes and incidents, are such episodes as that of the small boy, an imbecile, whom he observed gazing through the railings of the playground of the village school, and becoming wildly excited at a fight between two boys, whose movements he followed convulsively, like an intoxicated referee. "Those within," the author comments, "are happy—now; the one outside is happy—always." The last incident in the book—a meeting with the village idiot who is overjoyed at his good luck in finding a bit of coke on the road—enforces the same moral, and is so excellently described that the reader may wish, both for his sake and the author's, that Mr. FURST had indulged his natural vein more often.

H. K.

Secret Agent

The curtain of *The Grand Design* (MACMILLAN, 10/6) rises on an inn at Abbeville; and on the first of Charles II's illegitimate sons—the rumoured result of royal philanderings in Jersey—whose task it is to pass inconspicuously between Whitehall and Versailles with secret dispatches. It is an adventurous life; and the only drawback to *James de la Cloche's* felicity is that, as the putative son of a pastor, he is unable to woo his supposed half-sister *Snubs*. All goes well in cloak-and-sword fashion, until the two collaborators who make up "DAVID PILGRIM" accompany their hero to a Roman seminary. Here ecclesiastics as fantastic as Daudet's *Père Gaucher*—and quite as ready as that stalwart maker of liqueurs to damn themselves

for the good of the community—are subjected to serious reprobation on the part of *Snubs*; and ultimately *James* himself, disillusioned by king and clerics, falls back on a wife, a Bible and a farm in Jersey. "I feel the responsibility," said the author of *John Inglesant*, dealing with a similar theme, "of introducing historical characters and orders of men into a work of this kind." Had "DAVID PILGRIM" displayed an equal sensibility, an entertaining tale would not have degenerated into a tract. H. P. E.

Florilegium Militis

LORD WAVELL has read much poetry, he tells us, and having a retentive memory (strengthened no doubt by Morning Lines at Winchester) much of it has remained in his head. He began this anthology—*Other Men's Flowers* is its title (JONATHAN CAPE, 10/6)—with a view to amusing his son and without any idea of publication. Nothing but the thread that binds the bunch together is his own, but that thread is revealing and interesting. This is a soldier's selection, and you perceive at once that he likes best those poets whose feet are firmly on the ground, who have courage and humanity. Hence we have plenty of Browning, Kipling, and G. K. Chesterton, pieces from Henley's "Lyra Heroica," snatches from Scott and Macaulay, James Elroy Flecker, and (what some may regard as a sad descent) Adam Lindsay Gordon and Barham of the "Ingoldsby Legends." Lord WAVELL's notes, he modestly states, are not altogether his fault—the publisher asked for them; but they are illuminating. He likes Browning's worldly bishops and rakish painter (Fra Lippo Lippi) who seem more human and credible than Tennyson's "smug knights of the Round Table." He confesses too that to his old-fashioned understanding most modern poetry lacks dignity and has neither beauty nor tune, but with true Wykehamical tolerance allows that his son finds them interesting and bows to his younger and fresher appraisal. We learn too from his notes that he was for one term Raymond Asquith's fag in college—he was on the roll of 1896—and includes his verses "In Praise of Young Girls." Also it is clear that he preferred Saul to David, whom he cannot forgive for the treacherous murder of Uriah and his posthumous revenge on Joab—the only Commander-in-Chief, he adds with a touch of regretful humour, whom history records to have bumped off personally two others. An interesting anthology, more perhaps from the light it throws on the collector's character than for its intrinsic merit.

L. W.



"And what are supposed to be the advantages of this proposed change in the rule of the road?"



"The train now standing at platform five is the 1.43 for Hamswitch, Gloode and Beigewater, and will Harry Jones, porter, please get a move on with my sandwiches and stop gassing to those Wrens."

Cloud Landing

AT the moment I feel both literally and metaphorically on top of the world.

Taking a reading from my altimeter by sitting as low as possible in the bucket-seat of my aeroplane and peering upwards beneath the overhanging crash-pad into the shadows it casts across the instrument panel, I notice that we are flying at a height of six thousand feet. Beneath us is a thick carpet of cloud and above us the sun shines down on the brilliant yellow of our wings and reflects its dazzling light from the small metal buckle on the elastic of the Meyrowitz goggles adorning the head of the gentleman in the beautiful black helmet.

I have come to know every stitch of this helmet, every mark and every

blemish on its otherwise smooth black surface, the even spacing of the two little leather loops through which the elastic of the goggles runs; and to-day, as I sit up here blissfully content in the tranquillity of my surroundings, strangely undisturbed by any staccato interjections from the gentleman in front, something is amiss which upsets my ordered and meticulous mind to a relatively disproportionate degree. The elastic is twisted and both the little leather loops which are normally secured to the helmet by "poppers" have become "unpopped" and flutter irritatingly in the slip-stream every time the gentleman turns his head to port or starboard.

It is strange that such a trivial irregularity should absorb so much of

my attention, but twice within the last seven minutes I have been on the point of removing my Sutton harness, standing up in my seat and leaning forward over the intervening two feet of fuselage to rectify this surprising piece of carelessness. Only the thought of the gentleman's probable reactions at suddenly feeling my forefinger prodding him forcibly in the back of the head in mid-air has restrained me from putting my intentions into effect.

Determined, therefore, to occupy my thoughts for the remainder of the flight in some other way, I am suddenly aroused from my reverie by an astonishing suggestion barked at me over what, in conformity with accepted aeronautical colloquialism and despite

my love of pedantry, I am forced to refer to as the "intercom." If I am to believe my hearing, the instructions that have just been passed to me are that I shall "land" the aeroplane on the cloud beneath us!

Surely the gentleman in the beautiful black helmet has not suddenly taken leave of his senses? To be alone in the air with a lunatic is an unsavoury prospect at the best of times, and yet I cannot really bring myself to inquire tentatively whether the gentleman feels possibly a little "unwell," let alone to suggest that he is not in full possession of his faculties. It may be of course that he desires to test my reactions to such a strange injunction, to see whether I have so little initiative as to comply with any order no matter how obviously unsound it may be. It could be, I suppose, a catch—an incredibly elementary test of my knowledge of meteorology suggesting that I may possibly be under the impression that banks of cloud like this are not only "solid" in the metaphorical sense but in the literal sense as well. If this indeed is so then the gentleman gives little credit for my powers of reasoning, for have we not climbed through this mass to attain our present altitude?

I will make it quite clear, therefore, that I am no fool, and so, inserting my lips well into the green rubber mouth-piece of the speaking-tube, I point out with all due deference that if we were to attempt such a thing we should undoubtedly fall through.

My observation is received for the moment in silence, so that I am about to seize the opportunity of adding a remark of respectful jocularly when I am informed in cutting tones that the intention is not actually to touch-down fully stalled on the cloud but merely to use it as a make-believe aerodrome for the purpose of practising judgment in approaching and holding off at the right height. I am to retain plenty of flying speed, bring the wheels to within a few feet of the top surface and then open the throttle and climb. It should, the gentleman goes on to say, be quite easy even for me to perform, as he estimates the cloud to cover an area of at least thirty-five square miles, so that there should be little likelihood of my missing it altogether as is prone to happen in my attempts to get into the aerodrome. Furthermore, he points out, there is not another aeroplane in sight with which, in my accustomed way, I might find myself endeavouring to collide on my final gliding turn.

I consider it unnecessary to reply to these remarks, even though I permit

myself to go so far as to look a little hurt in the hope that he will notice my expression reflected in his mirror on the centre-section strut. Throttling back to start my glide, therefore, I concentrate on the manoeuvre I have been ordered to perform. . . .

The needle of my altimeter is now pointing to 4,500 feet, and so far my movements on the controls have elicited no comment from the gentleman in front. If all goes well for the next few moments perhaps he will be disposed to treat me with more reasonable civility. Glueing my eyes to a spot forty feet in front of the leading edge of the port lower main plane, I anxiously await the moment when I shall see the surface of the cloud begin to move more swiftly beneath the machine. On the instant, then, I shall know that I must check the glide and begin to hold off. . . .

Ah, there it is! Gently I move the control column back a few inches, then a few inches more. Back! Back! What a perfect three-point landing

this is going to be! How skilfully I am gauging my height above the cloud! Back still further! That's—

Oh, dread! What has happened now? Can it be—? Yes, I have stalled! Oh, what a fool am I! Why did I not pay more attention to my air-speed? But there is worse to come! Before we disappear from view into the cloud beneath I catch a fleeting glimpse of that black helmet and notice with terrible misgiving that the viciousness of the stall has caused the gentleman's goggles, which he had raised temporarily above his eyes, to be whisked off his head. The leather loops, being unfastened, have failed to serve their intended purpose, and a pair of Meyrowitz specialities at four guineas a pair precede us into the cloud on their way to the ground.

In the dense interior of this vast belt of stratocumulus the gentleman has recovered the aeroplane from the stall and is assuredly preparing a few choice remarks well suited to the occasion. . . .



Siren Song

FAMILIAR as it is, I still think there's something about a siren. Listen to it. With what age-old pain does it find voice, with what passion of grief cry out on fate, with what mounting woe blazon the intolerable wrong. Then in what abandon of despair comes it brokenly down to proclaim the pity of it all. And as if that were not enough it finds stimulus in desolation, strength in injustice and goes wailing up again and still up, though well we know that fraught heart will break before grief has had its due. And there it is faltering, lapsing back, wearily, drearily, to hopeless incoherence. Electra could not improve on it.

That was the sound that cut into our conversation the other night—a pleasant, frivolous club conversation, diverse and trivial as a sundae, if you remember what a sundae is, and a very ill-mannered interruption too. I don't know when reality has been ruder.

We ignored it, of course. Service Corps went on with his tale. Wilts sucked an appreciative pipe. Beds gurgled on the sofa. Signals thought up one to cap it.

Then of course the inevitable happened. Another sounded in the next block and that did for us. Electra, sublime on the stage, is intolerable in the stalls. Wilts looked at Beds, Beds Wilts.

"Siren?" said Signals, casually.

"I believe it was," Service Corps responded, surprised.

One sounded in the distance.

"Siren," asserted Beds, convinced.

"As I was saying . . ." resumed

Service Corps, but it wasn't a bit like what he had been. The guns opened up and blew the bottom out of our poor irresponsible talk.

"Guns?" inquired Signals.

"Guns, I think," replied Service Corps judiciously.

"Ack-ack," said Beds, clinching it.

"I was at a meeting the other day," observed Service Corps, as if determined we shouldn't think it the other night, "a meeting on Indian Home Rule."

"Were you?" we asked, enthusiastically, chilled.

Sw-ee-sh, bang!

"On," said Service Corps thoughtfully, "Indian. Home. Rule."

"Indian Home Rule?" asked Signals, anxious to get the location right.

Wilts plucked out his pipe. "Swaraj," he rapped and replaced it like a stopper.

"A prominent Indian was there."

"Speaking," said Beds, collaborating.

"Speaking," said Service Corps, listening.

And indeed, we all were, to a familiar descending whistle. There was a crash and a rumble of masonry.

"Rocket-gun," said Wilts, uncorking and recorking himself.

"His point was," continued Service Corps, taking breath, "that if British influence were withdrawn (*Crack!*) now (*Crack!*) the people of India (*Crack!*) would unite against the common-foe." (*Crack! Crack! Crack!*)

"Don't you think?" he asked, staggered a little by the explosive punctuation.

"The question," propounded Beds, "is a thorny one. (*Crack!*) A difficult and complicated one. (*Crack! Crack!*) One of long standing. (*Crack!*) One," he went on, as if determined to outpace the detonations, "that needs careful consideration."

Crack! said the *Luftwaffe* maliciously.

"Very careful consideration," agreed Beds, Britishly.

Whoosh—bang! said the *Luftwaffe*.

"Bomb?" queried Signals. "Wavell the man?"

"In all these things," asserted Service Corps, "it comes down, I maintain, to the individual."

"Yes?" we said to cover the dreadful pun.

"Take the individual Indian and the individual Britisher . . ."

But before we could the floor heaved under our feet and then steadied itself.

"And put them in a room," said Service Corps, strangely.

"Exactly," unbottled Wilts. "Religious question."

"And they'd soon find firm ground," finished Service Corps, irrevocably committed.

The *Luftwaffe* laughed and the guns played merry hell.

"Caste," said Beds. "They're dropping stuff. Different castes."

It was thus we saw it through, till silence came and the blessed All-Clear. (How different a tune can be played on one instrument!)

We all relaxed. Wilts uttered a gusty sigh of relief, then, turning to Service Corps: "What was it you said you'd been to?" he asked.



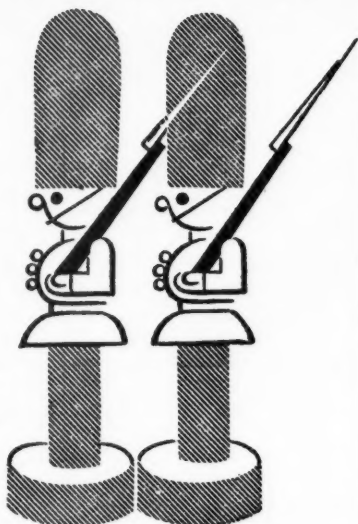
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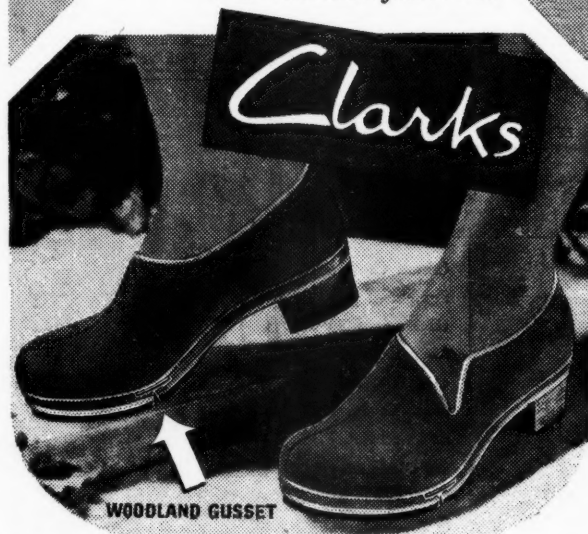
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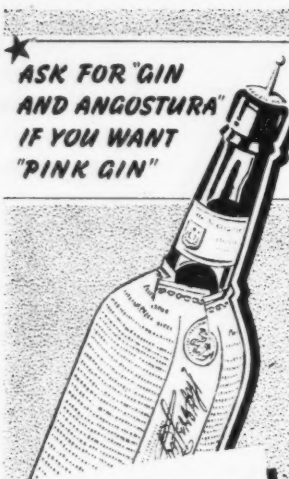
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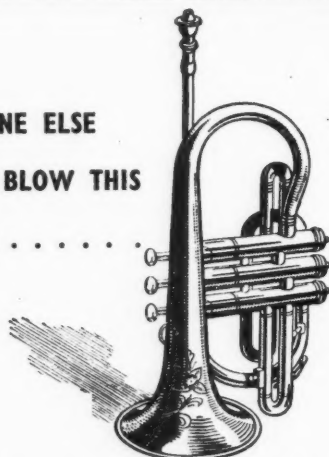
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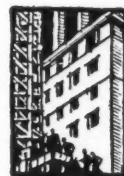
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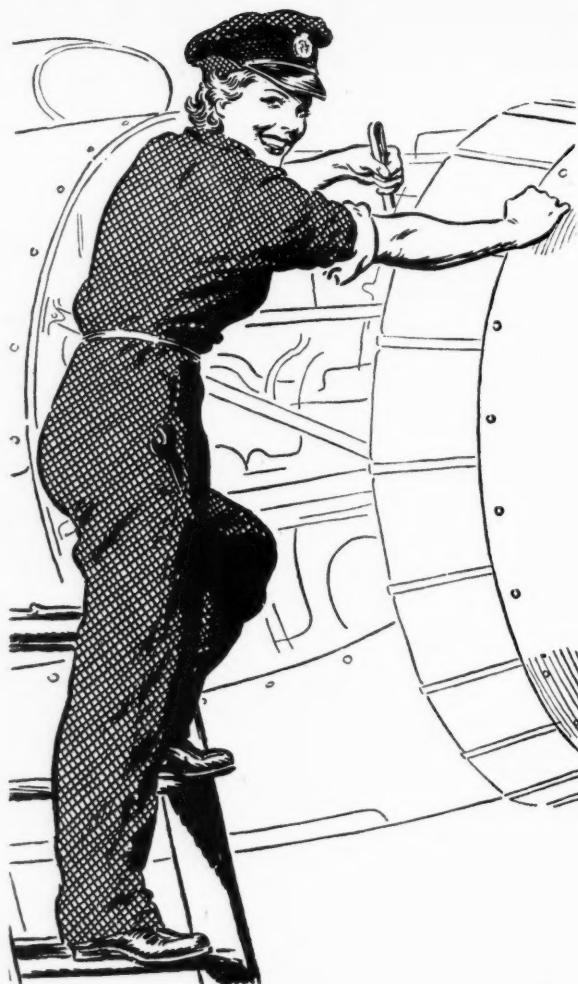
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